

LESSON 2



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 14 2023

law meets love

Scripture Story: Genesis 3.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 3 and 4.

Key Text: Genesis 3:8, 9

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The perfect atmosphere of Eden provided Adam and Eve with an abundant life. However, every good quality (wisdom, beauty, influence) that Lucifer possessed in heaven became a tool for the dark purpose of his self-absorbed existence. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only place that Satan was permitted to interact with Adam and Eve—but it was enough. The deceiver intrigued Eve not only to doubt God’s word but also to mistrust His motives. Satan tempted Eve to suspect that God forbade them to eat the fruit because He didn’t want them to become like Him. Eve took the bait, and Adam simply loved Eve more than he trusted God.

When God’s voice was heard in the garden, His question was, “Where are you?” Lost. Hiding. Broken. Afraid to face God. They tried to excuse their behavior or blame someone else. Selfishness leads to self-preservation. But God’s selflessness led to a solution to their problem. There was only one way fallen humanity could be restored, and that was for someone to pay the wages of sin. Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death,” and Hebrews echoes the unbendable law of life—“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22, NIV). Paul describes the rule that since one man caused sin to enter the world, then one perfect life of obedience and sacrifice could pay the price (Romans 5:17-20). Only one in the universe could pay such a price—the Creator Himself. In the garden God revealed the future to Adam and Eve, as well as a promise about Satan’s demise.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the significance of the events that took place in the Garden of Eden. (*Know*)
- Experience the enduring love that prompted God to personally restore fallen humanity. (*Feel*)
- Be given an opportunity to fully embrace God’s provision of grace, and reject the sin and lies with which Satan snares humanity. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

The Great Controversy, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 8

“All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God’s adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the global flood, as presented in the historical account of Genesis 1-11. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated” (Gen. 3; 6-8; Job 1:6-12; Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:12-18; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:4; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Peter 3:6; Rev. 12:4-9).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Cody grew up in a small town with friends who played music and competed on the baseball team. When Cody turned 16, he became interested in cars, while his core group of friends didn't seem to share the same interest. Morty, one of the older boys at school, invited Cody to join the auto mechanics class with him. Cody would go over to Morty's house and they would work on an old car together. Cody quit the baseball team and the band and began to spend all his time with Morty and his friends.

One day, while Cody was hanging out at Morty's house, two police cars pulled up and Morty and his friends were arrested. Cody stood alone in the yard holding a greasy wrench. With each footstep toward home he was reminded of the distance that had grown between him and his lifelong friends.

The next day the paper reported that Morty and his friends were convicted for a hit-and-run accident, as well as possession of stolen equipment.

Cody couldn't bear to look his lifelong friends in the face. He avoided them at school. When it was time for auto mechanics class he was there alone with the teacher. Then, just as the bell rang, the door to the shop flew open, and six students rushed in with pink slips for the teacher to sign. It was Cody's old friends. They crowded around the surprised teacher as he signed the papers allowing the new students to join the class.

The shame and fear that haunted Cody began to melt away as his old friends quietly took places around the big, square table in the shop. One picked up a wrench and asked the teacher, "So, what do you call this thing?" They all burst out in laughter, but Cody fought back the tears as he laughed because he had been such a fool.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Adam and Eve failed to trust God's word, and the temptation to try to become like God was so strong for them that they gave in. Their disobedience marks every person since their fall with a broken relationship with their Creator. But God came to them in their shame and made a way for them to be redeemed and restored—completely. Over time the fruit of sin would ripen, but so would the seeds of God's love for humanity. By putting the condemnation on His Son, and promising justice for Lucifer one day, God fulfills His promise to make things right. God secures for anyone who believes a chance to live with Him again.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Who are the main characters?
- *Underline* all the questions that are asked. What is significant about each question? Look carefully at the way Satan twists the words around.
- What key words, phrases, and actions are crucial to the message of the story? *Circle* the key words and indicate why you think they are important.
- Divide the story into at least four scenes and create an appropriate title for each part of the narrative.
- As you read this story, is there: a warning to heed, an example to follow, a prayer to pray, a promise to claim, a sin to confess, a truth to believe?
- If you were to pick three verses from this reading that were key to understanding the plan of redemption, which three would you choose?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: John 3:16, 17; Revelation 12:10-12; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 5:8; Isaiah 53.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

1. The Law of God

While there are no “Ten Commandments” in the Garden of Eden as such, there is a law. The same law that Lucifer defied in heaven exists as the foundation of God’s kingdom. The law is about complete loyalty to God and a selfless love toward others. The Hebrew word for *law*, or *Torah*, actually means “to throw the rock.” It grows out of the ancient act of throwing a rock when traveling at night so as to negotiate your way in the darkness. When a traveler would reach an uncertain place in the road, they would throw a rock in the darkness and listen for evidence of what they could not see. If there was water, they would hear a splash. If there was a tree, they would hear a crack. If they heard nothing, it was probably a steep drop-off. If they heard someone yell, it was safe to assume that someone was on the road ahead. The rules of God’s kingdom inform us about the right way to go. God’s Word and His law are trustworthy (Psalm 19:7).

2. The Temptation

Another important feature of this story is the way Satan twists the right words around to make them mean something slightly different.

Satan didn’t come right out and overtly undermine God to Adam and Eve. Compare God’s words in Genesis 2:16, 17 with Satan’s question in Genesis 3:1. Eve corrects the serpent but gets caught in verses 3 and 4 when the serpent causes her to question why God might have such strict rules. And so God’s motives become suspect.

3. Death Enters the Scene

The idea and reality of death is introduced in the Garden of Eden. Death is not just a point at which a person ceases to exist. Death in the Old Testament includes the idea of corruption and suffering that is the product of a broken relationship with God. When mankind, and the whole earth, is cut off from intimate communion with God, things get pretty warped. Adam and Eve hide from God, Cain murders his brother, Lamech takes two wives, the earth gets cursed, and everything seems to go downhill quickly after sin enters. Death is more than the ending of a life—it’s the absence of the abundant life.

4. The Prophecy of the Woman, the Seed, and the Snake

God made a prophecy about the woman and the snake. In Genesis 3:15, God says, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (NIV).

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson. Invite students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the Key Text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from *Out of the Story*.

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.

Compare this passage with Revelation 12:1-11 and notice the fierce enmity between the two over time. Not only are Eve's children and the promised Messiah enemies of the dragon, but God promises that the snake will be defeated. Paul picks up on this promise in Romans 16:20 when he writes, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you" (NIV). You may want to have the students gather in groups and consider how these three passages are connected to the great plan of redemption. What is significant about what Paul wrote is that God's grace is really what breaks the back of sin and Satan eternally.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Voting

Voting is a technique that takes seemingly opinionated or outrageous statements about a topic that might elicit a quick response but which become more and more clear when discussed. In a way, "agree or disagree" statements are like a paradox. A paradox is an ancient teaching method that makes a bold statement that initially seems like a contradiction, but later begins to make sense as more thought is applied to it. For example, in Matthew 16:25 Jesus says, "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it" (NIV). In order to understand this statement, the student is required to think carefully about the content.

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III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

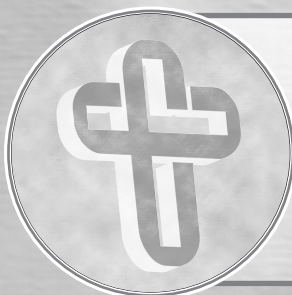
Bring a few magnets with a variety of small nails, screws, and paper clips. Have students test which nail, screw, or paper clip is drawn to the magnet most. Have the students move the magnet toward the elements and determine which is most likely to be drawn as well as which resists the pull the most effectively. The point of the exercise is to show that, even though the nails do not really resist the magnet, there is less in them that is drawn to the magnet. This illustrates the way temptation works in our lives.

Ask: What is it in your life that is drawn to temptation?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The whole story of Eden seems so far away from life today. But when we look at what Adam and Eve were tempted with, we recognize that the true nature of sin is to get people to distrust God and focus on self. The mess that was made in Eden is awful, but God's response to sin is awesome. Ellen White penned these powerful words about the plan of salvation: "He [Christ] bade the angelic host to be in accord with the plan that His Father had accepted, and rejoice that, through His death, fallen man could be reconciled to God. Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. The glory and blessedness of a world redeemed, outmeasured even the anguish and sacrifice of the Prince of Life" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 65). Far beyond our brokenness and sin is the perfect and amazing grace of God that saves us.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 3 and 4. A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.



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STUDENT LESSON

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law meets love



Photo by Bill Wolf

flashlight

“He [Christ] bade the angelic host to be in accord with the plan that His Father had accepted, and rejoice that, through His death, fallen man could be reconciled to God. Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. The glory and blessedness of a world redeemed outmeasured even the anguish and sacrifice of the Prince of life” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 65).

keytext

“Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’”

(Genesis 3:8, 9, NIV)

what do you think?

Agree or Disagree (A/D)

___ The real sin in the garden was not so much listening to the serpent's lie as it was distrusting what God had already said.

___ The plan of salvation enables us to be closer to God than Adam and Eve were before the Fall.

___ The fact that Christ died to pay the debt of sin is evidence that God's law of love is unbending.

did you know?

The Barna Research Group reported the following results from one of their polls:

1. If a person is generally good or does enough good things for others, they will earn a place in heaven.

- 31% strongly agree
- 20% agree somewhat
- 11% disagree somewhat
- 31% strongly disagree
- 7% don't know

2. The whole idea of sin is outdated.

- 7% strongly agree
- 6% agree somewhat
- 15% disagree somewhat
- 68% strongly disagree
- 5% don't know

What do these statistics say about people's understanding of sin and salvation?

INTO THE STORY

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”?’

“The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’

“‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband,

who was with her, and he ate it.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’ And he said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’ The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.”

(Genesis 3:1-13, 21-24, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Who are the main characters in this story?

Underline all the questions that are asked in this story. What is significant about each question?

What key words, phrases, and emotions are central to the message of this story? *Circle* the words and indicate why you think they are important.

Break this story up into at least four scenes and create an appropriate title for each part of the narrative.

As you read this story, is there: a warning to heed, an example to follow, a prayer to pray, a promise to claim, a sin to confess, or a truth to believe?

If you were to pick three verses from this reading that were key to understanding God's plan to redeem us, which three would you choose?

punch lines

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, NIV).

"The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself" (John 12:31, 32, NLT).

"The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17, NLT).

"Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:18, 19, NLT).

further insight

"It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen."—Ellen G. White, *The*

Desire of Ages, p. 25.

connecting to life

Sabbath

Read Romans 5:18, 19.

The *What Do You Think?* exercise offers a few questions that you are to agree or disagree with and asks you to state why. Consider the passage from today's Scripture: "Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:18, 19, NLT). What is the most meaningful part of the verse to you? Why?

Sunday

Read Romans 6:23.

The story of the temptation and the Fall is in the *Into the Story* section. Which phrases or verses are the most critical to the meaning of the story? Why do you think God asked Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:8, NIV). What if Adam and Eve had never come out of hiding when God called to them? What kind of emotions do you think Adam and Eve were experiencing as they hid in the bushes from God?

Whom do you know who might be staying away from God's grace because they feel ashamed or alone in their sin? What can you do to help restore them? A letter? A phone call? A prayer?

Monday

Read Genesis 3:8, 9.

Read the *Key Text* in a couple of different translations if possible. Rewrite the verse in your own words, including the different emotions you think Adam and Eve were feeling.

Read Romans 5:8 and make a connection to what Paul says about redemption and what occurred in the Garden of Eden. When has God touched your heart "while" you were far away from Him?

Tuesday

Read Romans 5:17.

Take a look in the *Flashlight* section at the powerful statement Ellen White makes about the glory of a redeemed world. Especially consider the phrase "The glory and blessedness of a world redeemed outmeasured even the anguish and sacrifice of the Prince of life" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 65). Apparently the big picture of the plan of salvation enabled the angels to rejoice even though it meant the death of the Son of God. Do you know someone who, like the angels of heaven, has the ability to see the big picture in life? How has this person helped you see the big picture?

Wednesday

Read the verses and find the texts in the *Punch Lines* section and identify the phrase or sentence that comforts you the most. Which phrase or verse causes you to think about your relationship with God right now? Do you know someone who needs to experience the matchless love of Christ this week? Say a prayer for them. Write out two to three encouraging verses from this section and find a way to share them.

Thursday

Read John 12:31, 32.

Read chapters 3 and 4 of *Patriarchs and Prophets* and make a list of all the words that convey the emotions of God in these two chapters. What are some comments Ellen White makes that are timeless and relate to your life today? Whom do you know who has truly accepted God's free gift of salvation? Ask them to share how they have learned to rest in God's grace and what specific ways they remind themselves of God's redeeming love.

Friday

Read Isaiah 9:6.

What are some aspects of God's character that you are absolutely certain about—no doubt, whatsoever? What are some aspects you wonder about?

Think of a time in your life when you unknowingly believed a lie about someone else. How did you feel after you found out that it was not true? Reflect on Adam and Eve's experience after disobeying God in the garden and make a list of what emotions you think overpowered them.

If you were to answer the question "Where are you?" that God asked Adam and Eve, what would be your answer today? Write out a prayer of response to God's offering you the same salvation He offered Adam and Eve in the garden.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 3 and 4.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.